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B1

a storage unit for the assigned order number that is coupled to the computer;

a label generator for receiving the assigned order number from the cafeteria web site and generating a label identifying the assigned order number for a corresponding prepared order; and

an automated check-out station for receiving an assigned order number and for verifying that the received assigned order number corresponds to the assigned order number on the generated label for a prepared order presented to the automated check-out station so that the prepared order may be obtained at the automated check-out counter.

(New) 8. The system of claim 7 wherein the storage unit for the assigned order number is a printout of the order number.

(New) 9. The system of claim 7 wherein the storage unit for the assigned order is a printout of a bar code corresponding to the order number; and

the automated check-out station reads the printout of the bar code and verifies the assigned order number by determining whether the printout of the bar code corresponds to the assigned order number.

(New) 10. The system of claim 7 wherein the computer is a personal digital assistant (PDA) and the storage unit for the assigned order number is internal to the PDA.

(New) 11. The system of claim 7 further comprising:

a card reader coupled to the computer; and

the storage unit is a stored-value card so that an assigned order number transmitted to the computer from the cafeteria web site may be stored by the card reader in the stored-value card.

(New) 12. The system of claim 7 further comprising:

a card reader coupled to the computer, the card reader for reading a stored-value card having a permanent identification number; and

the permanent identification number being transmitted to the cafeteria web site for use as the assigned order number.

(New) 13. The system of claim 7 wherein the check-out station deducts an amount corresponding to the prepared order identified by the assigned order number from an added-value card.

(New) 14. The system of claim 7 further comprising:

a basket for holding a prepared order, the basket having a sensor for detecting removal of a prepared order placed within the basket and generating an alarm in response to detection of such removal; and

the automated check-out counter for deactivating the basket sensor so that the prepared order may be removed from the basket without generating the alarm in response to the detection of such removal.

(New) 15. The system of claim 14, the basket further comprising:

an anti-theft device coupled to the basket; and

the system further comprising:

a detector for detecting the unauthorized removal of the basket from the cafeteria so that the basket sensor has to be de-activated in order for

the prepared order within the basket to be removed from the cafeteria without generating an alarm.

(New) 16. A method for automating cafeteria order correlation comprising:

presenting a menu over a public-access network;  
selecting menu items from the presented menu;  
assigning an order number to an order comprised of menu selections;  
receiving the assigned order number;  
storing the assigned order number;  
generating a label identifying the assigned order number for a  
corresponding prepared order; and  
verifying that an assigned order number corresponds to the generated  
label identifying the assigned order number for a prepared order so the  
prepared order may be obtained contemporaneously with the assigned  
order number verification.

(New) 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the assigned order number storage is comprised of printing the assigned order number.

(New) 18. The method of claim 16 wherein the assigned order number storage is comprised of printing a bar code corresponding to the assigned order number;  
and

the assigned order number verification comprises determining whether the printout of the bar code corresponds to the assigned order number.

(New) 19. The method of claim 16 wherein the assigned order number storage comprises storing the assigned order number in a personal digital assistant (PDA); and the method further comprising:

reading the assigned order number from the PDA for verification of the assigned order number.

(New) 20. The method of claim 16, the assigned order number storage further comprising:

storing the assigned order number in a stored-value card.

(New) 21. The method of claim 16 further comprising:

reading a permanent identification number from a stored-value card; and

transmitting the permanent identification number to a cafeteria web site for use as an assigned order number for a prepared order.

(New) 22. The method of claim 16, the method further comprising:

deducting an amount corresponding to the prepared order identified by the assigned order number from an added-value card.

(New) 23. The method of claim 16 further comprising:

detecting removal of a prepared order from a basket containing the prepared order before order identification verification occurs; and

deactivating the removal detection so that the prepared order may be removed from the basket.

(New) 24. The method of claim 23, the method further comprising: